

VZCZCXRO7541

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RUEHLZ RUEHPOD RUEHROV RUEHSR RUEHTRO RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUCNDT #0583/01 1831903
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 011903Z JUL 08
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4532
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1716
RUEHJB/AMEMBASSY BUJUMBURA 0474
RUEHDR/AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM 0293
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 0346
RUEHKH/AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM 1197
RUEHLGB/AMEMBASSY KIGALI 0278
RUEHKI/AMEMBASSY KINSHASA 1551
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0692

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 USUN NEW YORK 000583

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SOCI](#) [UNSC](#) [KWMN](#)

SUBJECT: UN SECURITY COUNCIL THEMATIC DEBATE AND RESOLUTION
ON "WOMEN AND PEACE AND SECURITY"

SUMMARY

11. (U) Secretary Rice presided over the Security Council Thematic Debate on "Women and peace and security: Sexual Violence in Situations of Armed Conflict" on June 19. Recurrent themes of the debate included that sexual violence may be considered a tactic of war, that it may impede the restoration of international peace and security, and that it is a security issue to which the Council must respond. During the debate, the Security Council affirmed that widespread or systematic sexual violence can constitute a war crime, crime against humanity, and/ or a constitutive act with respect to genocide. All speakers underscored the need to prevent sexual violence, as well as the need to end impunity by holding all perpetrators accountable, including UN personnel. Council members and other speakers stressed that more systematic and reliable information on sexual violence is needed and requested that the Secretary-General submit a report to the Council. The need for strengthened individual peacekeeping mandates, including civilian protection, was emphasized. The resolution also stressed the importance of women's full participation in all decision-making and peace processes, including at high-levels. At the end of the debate, the UNSCR resolution 1820(2008) on "Women and peace and security" was adopted by consensus. End Summary.

MINISTERIAL DEBATE

12. (U) The event was well attended with 60 speakers, including nine ministers and vice ministers in addition to Secretary Rice. Almost all speakers expressed concern about the epidemic frequency with which sexual violence is employed in the Democratic Republic of Congo and in Darfur. All of the ministers noted that it is important to address sexual violence in armed conflicts because it signals that the Council is prepared to take actions to prevent sexual violence as well as to punish perpetrators. The summaries for the Secretary of State, statements by Croatia, South Africa, Burkina Faso, the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, and Italy, as well as opening statements by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, UN Deputy Secretary-General Migiro, Foreign Minister King-Akerele of Liberia, and other opening speakers will be reported SEPTEL.

CHINA/ RUSSIA

13. (U) China and Russia emphasized that the Security Council should focus its efforts on prevention of conflicts, peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction, and that sexual violence should be addressed within this context and not as a stand alone issue. China and Viet Nam stated that states bear the primary responsibility for the protection of women, and China noted that generous contributions from the international community are required to build such national capacities. China and Russia urged all countries, who have not yet done so, to take measures to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. China, Russia, and Viet Nam noted that a duplication of the Secretary-General's efforts must be avoided, and they requested that coordination in the development of the reports submitted to the General Assembly and to the Council be assured. Despite raising objections and difficulties during negotiation of UNSCR 1820(2008), China and Russia joined the other Security Council members in unanimous adoption of the resolution.

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS

14. (U) Other Security Council members, including Libya, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Panama, and Croatia expressed their grave concern about sexual violence being used as a tactic of war and conveyed their support for the resolution. Libya noted

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that sexual violence is not accepted or promoted in any religion and suggested that booklets be developed and distributed to peacekeepers and other military personnel emphasizing the relevant moral and religious norms that prohibit sexual violence. Costa Rica emphasized that accountability and security sector reform efforts are not sufficient, and that the concentration of international efforts must be on the prevention of sexual violence, including through listening to the needs and hopes of women. Indonesia noted that sexual violence is a violation of human rights and international law, and that women must be protected at all times- not just during times of armed conflict. Panama noted that credible and reliable information is needed by the Council to respond appropriately to sexual violence and underscored the importance of the requested report of the Secretary-General to the Council. Croatia expressed its readiness, as a non-permanent member of the Council, to take a proactive role in the promotion of women.

PEACEBUILDING COMMISSION

15. (U) Ambassador Takasu of Japan, Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission, noted that greater political will is needed to spur concrete actions to ensure the full implementation of UNSCR 1325(2000) on "Women and peace and security". He recommended that the Security Council take measures to ensure increased collection of data on the impacts of sexual violence, take steps to prosecute perpetrators and end impunity, strengthen gender-sensitive training programs for peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel, and mainstream a gender perspective into all Security Council mandates. The PBC, he said, has undertaken efforts to ensure that gender is a critical priority in the integrated peacebuilding strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone.

DRC MINISTER

¶6. (U) Philomene Omatuku Atshakawo, Minister of Gender, Family and Children in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, highlighted that sexual violence in armed conflicts is a scandal with far-reaching negative impacts, including the promotion of HIV infections and a decrease in food security- if women cannot or are fearful to go into the fields, food cannot be collected. The DRC also acknowledged the role resource exploitation plays in the continuation of its internal conflict and in the increased feminization of poverty and vulnerability.

AFRICAN UNION

¶7. (U) Ambassador Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security for the African Union, underscored the importance of UN support to ensure the promotion of women's rights and protection within regional organizations, specifically the AU. Ambassador Stiglic of Slovenia, on behalf of the European Union, highlighted that men and boys may be subjected to sexual violence during armed conflicts, and that many boys have watched their mothers and sisters being raped and run a considerable risk of becoming perpetrators themselves. Mr. Tupouniua of the Kingdom of Tonga, on behalf of Pacific Small Island Developing States, highlighted the link between climate change and the security and well-being of women.

GENERAL DEBATE

¶8. (U) Several common themes emerged in the statements that followed: Lichtenstein, Ghana, Slovenia, Australia, Spain, New Zealand, Bangladesh, Netherlands, Israel, Iceland, Nigeria, Brazil, Switzerland, Ireland, Canada, Ecuador, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Austria, Argentina, Argentina, Colombia, United Republic of Tanzania, Germany, Kazakhstan, Iraq, Rwanda, Philippines, Afghanistan, El Salvador, Tonga, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Myanmar, Tunisia, Benin, Mauritania, and

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San Marino. Many countries noted that despite the adoption of S/RES/1325(2000) eight years ago, sexual violence in armed conflicts persists and is increasing, and that such epidemic sexual violence can constitute a threat to international peace and security and is therefore within the scope of the Security Council. To combat sexual violence, the following recommendations were made: gender-sensitive training for all peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel; strengthened Security Council mandates which include the protection of civilians; an increase in the number of female SRSGs and Special Envoy appointments; greater participation of women in all peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions and decision-making, including at high levels; strict enforcement of the "zero tolerance" policy; and the exclusion of crimes of sexual violence from amnesty provisions. Multiple countries emphasized that widespread and systematic sexual violence can constitute a war crime, a crime against humanity, and/or a constitutive act with respect to genocide, and that the Security Council should, where appropriate, refer cases of sexual violence to the International Criminal Court or ad hoc tribunals. Several countries recommended that the Council establish a Working Group to monitor the implementation of this resolution as well as S/RES/1325(2000), and that a mechanism be developed to share best practices and lessons learned.

¶9. (U) US Ambassador Khalilzad, as President of the Security Council for June, presided over the vote on the resolution which was adopted unanimously as S/RES/1820(2008) on "Women and peace and security".

¶10. (U) For a complete summary of the thematic debate, see: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2008/sc9364.doc.htm>.

¶11. (U) Other high level speakers at the debate included UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon; Mrs. Olubanke King-Akerele, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Liberia; Mr. Srgjan Kerim, President of the UN General Assembly; Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro, UN Deputy Secretary-General; Major-General Patrick Cammaert, Former Division Commander of MONUC; Mrs. Jadranka Kosor, Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Family, Veterans' Affairs and Intergenerational Solidarity of the Republic of Croatia; Ms. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa; Mr. Djibril Yipene Bassole, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso; Ms. Patricia Scotland, Baroness Scotland of Asthal, Attorney-General for England and Wales of the Government of the United Kingdom; Mr. Charles Michel, Minister of Development Cooperation of Belgium; Ms. Rama Yade, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Human Rights of France; Mr. Vincenzo Scotti, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Italy; and Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Special Envoy of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of China. See SEPTEL for further details of their statements.

Khalilzad